1:Du Bois E-5 (1938-1939) 1944
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ing instance. Langumi, who was courting Kokumi by helping her with the storage of her harvest, suggested that they had better marry, by saying, "Who will eat this corn I am stacking? I had better come and eat it myself."

TOOTH BLACKENING

It is during this period of adolescence that both boys and girls have their teeth blackened and filed. Again the matter is optional, but since shiny black teeth are much admired and long uneven ones are considered very ugly, practically every young person has his blackened and probably half have them filed. The process is more or less in the nature of a prolonged picnic, free from adult supervision. It is without doubt also a period of license for many of the young people, although adults vigorously contradicted my phrasing it so.

The best indication of the sexual liberty current at this time is that stricter parents forbid their daughters to remain in remote field houses overnight and insist upon their staying at home or near by in the house of some responsible elder kin. Further, when I visited such a group one evening at sundown just as the strips of dye were being passed out, the young man in charge of procuring and mixing the paste used to darken the teeth said sternly to the children, "Now, no intercourse tonight"—a comment that produced a ripple of giggling among the boys and girls.

The actual procedure is as follows: In July or August some young unmarried man, perhaps in his early twenties, announces that he will blacken teeth for the children of the community and designates the field house where it will be done. This is the slack season agriculturally, so that girls can be spared from the fields. He purchases from some friend in the village of Bukudatang a particular type of soil found there. This investment rarely exceeds five cents. With the earth he mixes a fruit resembling a small green fig. The resulting paste is smeared on a strip of banana bark which each child cuts to fit the size of his mouth. The preparation of each day's supply takes the better part of an afternoon. For at least seven nights, and often ten, the children sleep together in a field house, with the paste held against their teeth by the flexible bark strips. During the day boys assiduously hunt rats, and girls go to their fields to collect vegetable foods. The children all eat together, being careful to place small bits of food far back in their mouths in order not to spoil the dye. With the same objective a length of thin bamboo is used as a drinking tube during the period. Surplus rats are smoked to preserve them for a feast on the last day.

The whole procedure reminds one very much of "playing house." It is a carefree time for all the young people. There are no taboos sus-